



MEDIA RELEASE

30 October 2017

– Australian String Quartet National Tour *Beginnings* –

The ASQ's final tour of 2017 pays homage to disrupters from three musical eras.

On the back of its acclaimed tour through Northern America and Canada, and two sold-out performances with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, the Australian String Quartet (ASQ) embark on their final Australian tour for 2017, performing a thrilling program of **Beethoven**, **Bartók** and **Scarlatti** – each composer instrumental in changing the course of music forever.

At the beginning of the 19th Century, **Ludwig van Beethoven** embarked upon a musical journey which would pave the way for a new artistic movement. Unlike the more conventional nature of his earlier classical works, the composer's middle period bursts with emotion, drama and virtuosity. Through this period, Beethoven carries the baton into the Romantic period of art and expression. The ASQ will perform the first of Beethoven's *Razumovsky* Quartets of this era. Written shortly after his famous *Eroica Symphony*, the listener is drawn deep into this quartet's varied moods – the pastoral nature of the first movement, the boisterousness of the second, the anguish of the third and the cheerfulness of the finale.

Two simple words scrawled upon what remains of **Alessandro Scarlatti's** original manuscript for his *Sonata à quattro no 4* literally changed chamber music forever – *Senza cembalo* ('without harpsichord') gave birth to a brand new ensemble: the string quartet. This work, written specifically for four voices without harpsichord, is now able to be performed in spaces in which no such large instrument is present, allowing chamber music to be played anywhere, making it more accessible, to more people, more often. Scarlatti's work was conceived at the height of the eloquent Baroque period. Shimmering with elegance, the piece is filled with weaving countermelodies, searing chromatic harmonies and fascinating conversations between the instruments.

"It means a lot for us to perform Alessandro Scarlatti's piece. After all, had those immortal two words never featured on the score, the quartet may have evolved into a different beast." says ASQ's violist, Stephen King.

More than 200 years after Scarlatti's founding, the string quartet continues to thrive. In the early twentieth century **Béla Bartók** uses this ensemble to preserve a rich east European folk music in danger of extinction, writing and recording as much of the music as possible. He becomes known as late Romanticism's 'young radical'; his music speaking to new, younger and more curious audiences. The ASQ opens the door to Bartók's laboratory letting audiences in on Bartók's lush world of folk-infused late Romanticism.

ASQ cellist, Sharon Grigoryan says, *"Bartók's passion, energy and fearlessness is inspiring. His emotion is raw and his optimism infectious. As important as refining the piece's technical demands for us, is capturing its spirit. This is what we will bring to audiences on this tour."*

2017 has been a stellar year for the Australian String Quartet. The musical pioneers featured in this program provide a taste of what audiences can expect from the ensemble in 2018. With new ground-breaking programs and projects in planning, it's exciting times for music lovers.

For further media information – Angelina Zucco, Chief Executive, 1800 040 444
azucco@asq.com.au

About the ASQ

From its home base at the University of Adelaide, Elder Conservatorium of Music, the ASQ reaches out across Australia and the world to engage people with an outstanding program of performances, workshops, commissions and education projects.

Along with its regular national tours, festivals, Close Quarters gigs and education programs, 2017 highlights include acclaimed performances at the Adelaide, Perth and Melbourne International Arts Festivals, collaborations with the Tasmanian, Melbourne and Vancouver Symphony Orchestras, and international tours through Northern America and Canada.

The ASQ's 2018 program is rich with exciting projects. Alongside its National Season, the ASQ continues its successful flagship festivals in the Southern Grampians, Victoria and Western Australia's Margaret River and pilot a new mini-festival on the north-coast of New South Wales. 2018 also welcomes international tours to China and Europe; regional and metropolitan residencies; Australian recording initiatives; the continuation of the ASQ's successful morning series at UKARIA Cultural Centre, Close Quarters gigs in unique spaces across the country; and a partnership with Jumpgate VR on the development of a new digital platform.

TOUR DATES & TICKET PRICES

Sydney

Tuesday 14 November 7pm, City Recital Hall
Standard \$85, Concession \$62, Under 30 \$30
Tickets – City Recital Hall (02) 8256 2222 / cityrecitalhall.com

Adelaide

Wednesday 15 November 7pm, Adelaide Town Hall
Standard \$79, Concession \$56, Under 30 \$30
Tickets – Bass 131 246 / bass.net.au

Perth

Friday 17 November 7pm, Government House Ballroom
Standard \$85, Concession \$62, Under 30 \$30
Tickets – Ticketek 1300 795 012 / ticketek.com.au

Melbourne

Monday 20 November 7pm, Melbourne Recital Centre
Standard \$85, Concession \$62, Under 30 \$30
Tickets – Melbourne Recital Centre 03 9699 3333 / melbournerecital.com.au

Canberra

Sunday 26 November 2pm, Gandel Hall, National Gallery of Australia
Standard \$75, Concession \$60, Under 30 \$30
Tickets – National Gallery of Australia 02 6240 6701 / nga.gov.au

Brisbane

Monday 27 November 7pm, Conservatorium Theatre, South Bank
Standard \$79, Concession \$56, Under 30 \$30
Tickets – QTIX 136 246 / qtix.com.au

\$15 Student Rush tickets available at all venues one hour prior to the concert.